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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [ASEC](#) [KPAL](#) [KWBG](#) [IS](#) [ISRAELI](#) [PALESTINIAN](#) [AFFAIRS](#)

SUBJECT: GENERAL WARD AND ISRAELI DEFMIN DISCUSS

ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN SECURITY ISSUES

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires a.i. Gene A. Cretz; Reasons: 1.4 (B) and (D).

1. (C) Summary: Lieutenant General Ward and the Charge met with Defense Minister Mofaz in Tel Aviv on April 13, 2005, to review the current security situation in Israel and the Occupied Territories. General Ward said he sees the lack of trust and partnership on both sides as contributing to a negative atmosphere that undermines Israel's main peace partner, Palestinian Authority President Mahmud Abbas. He suggested that the GOI consider ways to move forward on the discussions of fugitives and the handover of Qalqilya to the PA security forces, and improve movement and quality of life for the Palestinians. Mofaz agreed that Abbas is a serious partner, but charged that the PA has violated its agreement on fugitives, failed to prevent rocket attacks against Israel, and is sending mixed signals on weapons smuggling from the Sinai. Mofaz insisted that the PA act quickly to both coordinate disengagement from Gaza/the northern West Bank and confront Palestinian terrorist organizations. End Summary.

Building Trust and a Capable Partner;
Israeli Complaints About PA Actions and Inaction

2. (C) General Ward updated the minister on how he views current progress with the Palestinian Authority, calling the situation "not all good, but also not all bad." General Ward said he sees the lack of trust and partnership on both sides as contributing to the focus on negative issues. He expressed concern that this strategy runs the risk of becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy and urged the GOI to move beyond the "glass half-empty" approach. General Ward agreed that President Abbas's actions to date are imperfect and incomplete. He cautioned the minister, however, that constant references to the PA's failures could undermine Abbas in a way that is not in Israeli or U.S. interests. General Ward said that if Abbas is the best partner available, then Israel and the United States should try to assist him and acknowledge any positive steps he makes. Specifically, General Ward suggested that finding a way to move forward on the discussions of fugitives and the handover of Qalqilya to the PA security forces, and to improve movement and quality of life for the Palestinians could assist Abbas in his efforts.

3. (C) Mofaz agreed that the GOI views Abbas as a serious partner, but then repeated the GOI's "glass half-empty" view of the PA's performance to date. Mofaz insisted that the PA must act quickly to coordinate disengagement from Gaza/the northern West Bank and must also confront Palestinian terrorist organizations. He complained that time is running out for the PA to name a person or agency to coordinate disengagement. (Note: PA Prime Minister Ahmad Quraya', Minister of Civil Affairs Mohammed Dahlan, and Interior Minister Nasser Yusif all have disengagement roles. End note). On security, Mofaz said the GOI believes that the terror organizations are getting stronger and that no PA security agency is dealing with them on the ground. He acknowledged that Abbas understands the problem, but claimed that PA forces do not obey the President's occasional orders to take action. The result, Mofaz said, is that Abbas coordinates his moves with both the PA and the terror organizations, but controls neither.

4. (C) On the subject of fugitives, Mofaz agreed that the GOI should continue its efforts to make progress and noted that the GOI-PA fugitive committee would meet "this week or next." He charged that the PA has clearly violated the agreement on fugitives. Mofaz said the two sides had agreed that the fugitives must disarm, desist from terrorist attacks, submit to supervision by the PA, and exclude themselves from membership in PA security organizations. He complained that 15 of the 17 Jericho fugitives had been accepted into the PA security forces after promising to renounce terrorism, a direct violation of the agreement. (Note: The PA has a different interpretation of the agreement. Interior Minister Nasser Yusif told ConGen Jerusalem that the Sharm al-Shaykh understanding does not exclude fugitives from joining the PA security services, and maintained that absorbing fugitives is the most effective tactic available to the PA to bring militants under control. Yusif also claimed that all of the Jericho fugitives on the IDF's list are under PA supervision,

as are all of the Tulkarm fugitives on the list except for four individuals who fled the city. End note).

15. (C) The minister also protested the PA's unwillingness or inability to prevent the firing of "nearly 100" rockets and missiles at Israeli targets on April 9. Addressing the incident that preceded the attacks, Mofaz said that there was no question that the three Palestinian youths killed by the IDF near the Philadelphi fence had been smuggling weapons. General Ward acknowledged the seriousness of the rocket attacks. He suggested that an IDF review of procedures for the use of deadly force might help limit the negative effects of future provocations. Mofaz agreed, saying the IDF would impose "strict regulations" to ensure that similar incidents do not recur in the current tense atmosphere.

16. (C) After listening to Mofaz's points, General Ward noted that he has a strong two-fold message for President Abbas. First, the PA needs to end personnel discussions and appoint new security chiefs who can make progress on reform, training and effective operations. Second, the PA needs to coordinate with the GOI on disengagement. General Ward reiterated his suggestions that both sides look for ways to create a more positive atmosphere. He also repeated his suggestion that the GOI consider actions to strengthen Abbas's ability to make progress.

Update on Smuggling Activities from the Sinai

17. (S) According to Mofaz, internal turmoil in the PA is undermining the anti-tunnel work in the Philadelphi Strip. He said the Preventive Security Organization is working to locate and destroy tunnels at the same time that PA Military Intelligence is smuggling weapons and contraband through the tunnels. Mofaz updated General Ward on a recent anti-smuggling operation on the Israel-Egypt border in which the IDF intercepted 66 Kalashnikov rifles being transported into Israel from the Sinai. Mofaz claimed that smugglers are increasing their efforts to move weapons from the Sinai to the West Bank, noting that the IDF is stopping some -- but not nearly all -- of this activity.

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